

Tournament time begins for everyone around the state this weekend. Wishing everyone the best and if you are not fortunate enough to reach the state tournament as a participant, I hope you can take at least one of the days and take in a day's worth of games. Huntington Park is an incredible site. More on that later.

*Jerry Snodgrass, Ass't. Commissioner*

## Some Odds & Ends

### More About "27 on 23"

The spring weather has been good but the worst has been on Saturday's. Wash out a DH on Saturday and you wash out 2 games on 1 date. Trying to make that up handcuffs you a bit as you are not permitted to play DH's during the week. All the more reason for a proposal for NEXT seasons' regulations to eliminate the '23 date' portion of that regulation and simply permit 27 games whenever you want to play them. The Board votes on next season's proposed regulations at the Thursday, May 10 Board of Directors' Meeting.

### Season Ending Date

Many do not realize the last date teams can play one of their 27 games is June 9. Yes...that is late. We actually had a team play a regular season contest after winning the state title a year ago. Just keep in mind if your season DOES go that long (unlikely) your players are prohibited from playing any non-interscholastic ball during that time.

### College Tryouts

Sorry to report this one. I have had a few reports around the state that NAIA schools have invited high school players to tryout during their high school season. Unfortunately, it violates Sports Regulation 6.3 and the tryout is considered Non-Interscholastic. The consequence? Suspension and ineligibility for the player(s) from the OHSAA tournament.

### 9 Inning Games?

Each year, I hear reports that coaches mutually agree to play a '9 inning game' all in the spirit of trying to help kids (playing more kids that may not get to play in a normal game). Problem is...NFHS playing rules require games to be 7 innings in length. So, it is not permissible to do this by playing rules.

### Honoring Individuals

NFHS playing rules permit the wearing of a 'black patch' or commemorative patch on the jersey (Rule 1-4-4 - Uniforms). It does NOT permit players to all wear the same number. Yes, MLB does permit it but it is NOT permitted in high school. The rule states you CAN honor by wearing a patch.

### Overscheduled?

Actually, it is not permitted by OHSAA Regulations. And Yes...we have all heard stories that it is 'done anyhow'. And this has been a year of reports of over scheduling and teams having to 'dump' games to remain within the '27 on 23'. Uh-oh. The result all too often is an opponent who has been 'dumped' notifies us of a contract dispute since THEY want the contract honored. It can get expensive.

### Off-Season Regulations Made Easy!

The off-season regulations create more questions than just about any other topic for school baseball coaches. In a nutshell, here are a few details regarding the various off-season regulations as well as a few "Q & A's" and other resources. Ultimately, players eligibility is affected by violations of off-season regulations so it is prudent to know these. They are also covered at each year's Rules Interp Meetings that are required of all high school head baseball coaches.

**All School Coaches, Paid OR Volunteer MUST be approved by a Board of Ed**

Since this is the case, it explains that ALL COACHES are bound by the same regulations.

**All Coaches are prohibited from coaching players from their own school anytime outside the season of play EXCEPT for 10 days during June and July.**

That is right...the ONLY time a school coach (in any team sport!) can coach players from their own school is during 10 days permitted during June & July.

Q: Does that mean that EACH coach is permitted 10 days?

A: No. The regulation clearly states that the 10 days are permitted per staff.

**Non-School Teams are limited to 4 players from any one school EXCEPT for June/July**

A fundamental rule for off-season team sports limits non-school teams to a '50% of a school's starting lineup' on the off-season team's roster. In baseball, this means that any non-school team is limited to 4 total players from the same school. This limitation is NOT in effect from May 25 through July. The 'danger area' is obviously up until May 25 as well as increasingly popular "Fall Ball". YOU have the ability to communicate this with players AND protect their eligibility. This is referenced in the General Sports' Regulation 6.5 (see inset box below).

Q: My school has an "Travel" team made up of 4 players that played for our JV team and 9 others that did not play. Can they do this?

A: Yes. The 50% limitation identifies only those that played for a school team the previous year.

Q: Do Junior High players fall under this regulation?

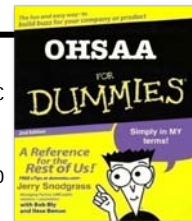
A: They do IF they play for the school sponsored Junior High teams.

**Players may not try-out, practice OR play with non-school teams until their season is over**

Another fundamental regulation strictly prohibits players from association with non-school teams during their season of play. This is clarified in Sports Regulation 6.3.

Q: Must JV players wait until the VARSITY season is complete to play for their summer team?

A: No. They can begin play with their summer team as soon as THEIR season is complete, however, they are ineligible to RETURN to dress/play for the Varsity at that point.



### Resources for Off-Season Q & A's

General Sports Regulations: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/rglts/GenSportsReg11-12.pdf>

Baseball Regulations: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/rglts/11-12BBReg.pdf>

Off-Season Q & A's: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/2012/TWIBFAQ.pdf>

"Fall Ball" Q and A's: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/2012/TWIBFall.pdf>

State-wide Tourney Brackets: <http://brackets.ohsaa.org/baseball/boys/tournament12/default.htm>

### Pitching Restrictions Vary From State to State

Pitching restrictions are a "State Adoption"; meaning that each state is able to determine what's best in their state. Ohio's of course limits pitchers to 10 innings in a 3 day period. Want to see what the rest of the nation does? Copy/Paste this link in your address bar: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/2012/StatebyStatePitchingRestrictions.pdf>

### Number of Games for Individuals

Though we know the contest limitations for TEAMS, I am often asked how many contests an INDIVIDUAL can participate in. That number is ALSO 27 for the season. For the player that moves 'up or down' from JV to Varsity, that is all fine and can even participate in both on the same day...but that individual is still limited to 27 total contests for the regular season (the OHSAA tournament does not count in that total.



## Plays of the Day – from DOD Kyle McNeely



A complete compilation of ALL “Plays of the Day” can be found by going to:  
<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/2012/TWIB2012POD.pdf>

*The following is a listing of the most recent “Plays of the Day” and the subsequent correct rulings that would be made as a result. Most are taken from actual cases that have occurred around the nation. Kyle McNeely is the OHSAA’s Director of Development for baseball umpires and is responsible for the education of umpires as well as recruiting new umpires. Kyle is the former chair of the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee.*

### Play Number One:

For many, this rule would be the equivalent to a "soft toss," but unfortunately for the umpires in this game, it was more like a smoking fastball.

**The Play:** With a runner on first base, the batter hit a drive to left-center field. As the runner from first slid into third base, he dislodged the base from its usual spot and moved it a few feet into foul ground. At the same time, the throw from the outfield hit the sliding runner and bounded down left-field line. The runner was easily able to get up and advance to home to score, and the batter, who had taken second base, now attempted to advance to third. The batter, not quite sure what to touch, decided to touch the spot where the base had been, and continued on to score when he touched home plate. The defense then legally appealed that the batter had missed third base.

When the defense appealed that the runner missed third, the umpires called the runner out, which created a brief, but intense discussion.

**The Ruling:** In actuality, the batter should be called safe on the appeal, and his run allowed. A succeeding runner merely has to touch or occupy the space/area where the base should be to be safe or judged to have touched the base. Fortunately, the run didn't matter by the time the game ended.

### Play Number Two:

**The Play:** In the third inning, with a runner on second base, the number five hitter for the home team steps in to hit, batting out-of-order as the number four batter should be hitting. The number five batter walks and reaches second base when ball four gets by the catcher and goes all the way back to a deep backstop. The runner on second reaches third base, as he was stealing on the pitch. The visiting team, before the next pitch or play, appeals the batting out-of-order.

**The Ruling (a):** The umpires enforced the batting-out-of order correctly, but then the “baseball gods” decided to have some fun. 2 innings later, there is a visiting team runner on first base, when the wrong batter steps to the plate. The batter eventually walks and advances to second, when ball four gets by the catcher. The runner that was on first base advances to third. The home team appeals, before the next pitch or play, the batting out-of-order. The 2 plays, to the visiting team's head coach, looked the same. He expected the same enforcement for his team that the home team had received just a little bit earlier. Ahhhh, but things may not always be as they appear!

**The Ruling (b):** In the batting-out-of order scenario in the third inning that involved the home team, the umpires ruled the proper batter out (correct call), but left the runner on second stay at third (again, correct call). The runner on third was allowed to stay because his advancement was on his own; it did not result from the play on an improper batter.

When what looked like the same scenario occurred to him a couple of innings later, the visiting team's head coach thought that his runner, too, would get to stay at third base. However, the rules would not agree. As before, the proper batter is called out, but the runner now on third must return to first base; his advancement was due to the play of the improper batter.

### Play Number Three:

This next play certainly created some emotions from one of the coaches.

**The Play:** A right-hander is listed on the official lineup card as the starting pitcher. In the second inning the opposing coach notices that a left-hander has been on the mound since the start of the game. He storms to the plate insisting that the right-hander must be put on the mound and pitch to at least one batter. What should the plate umpire do?

**The Ruling:** It is true that by rule, a starting pitcher is to pitch until the first opposing batter has been put out or has advanced to first base. There are some who think this means that if the starting pitcher cannot, for some reason, say his elbow or shoulder begins hurting as he takes his warm-up throws, or he back talks the coach, he still must go out to the mound and at least intentionally walk the first batter. This is simply not true. If the starting pitcher does not face one batter, the penalty is that while he may return and play another position, he cannot return to pitch in that game. Had the opposing coach caught this before the game started, the situation could have been handled at least in a manner where everyone knew what was occurring. But now, unless the plate umpire had definite knowledge that the right-hander did not pitch to the first batter, all that can be assumed is there was an unreported substitution. Everyone will update their respective lineups and scorebooks with the new pitcher, and the game will continue as is. And even if the plate umpire can recall that the right-hander did not pitch to the first batter, we won't make him come out to the mound. We will just inform his coach that he cannot pitch in this game. And that is most likely no problem for him.